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# Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

*Provisional*

## 6067th meeting

Thursday, 15 January 2009, 10 a.m.
New York

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| *President*: | Mr. Ripert | (France) |
| *Members*: | Austria | Mr. Mayr-Harting |
| | Burkina Faso | Mr. Kafando |
| | China | Mr. Liu Zhenmin |
| | Costa Rica | Mr. Urbina |
| | Croatia | Mr. Vilović |
| | Japan | Mr. Okuda |
| | Libyan Arab Jamahiriya | Mr. Dabbashi |
| | Mexico | Mr. Heller |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Shcherbak |
| | Turkey | Mr. İlkin |
| | Uganda | Mr. Butagira |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Sir John Sawers |
| | United States of America | Ms. DiCarlo |
| | Viet Nam | Mr. Hoang Chi Trung |

## Agenda

The situation in the Great Lakes region

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09-20963 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in the Great Lakes region**

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I propose, with the consent of the Council, to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on the Great Lakes region.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Obasanjo to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on the Great Lakes region.

I now give the floor to Mr. Obasanjo.

**Mr. Obasanjo**: I thank you, Mr. President, for your invitation to address the Council. I do so on behalf of my brother and colleague, former President Mkapa, and on my own behalf.

On 7 November 2008, the African Union and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region together held an extraordinary summit in Nairobi. This brought together regional heads of State, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to try to identify a solution once and for all to the crisis in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The summit endorsed my appointment as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on the Great Lakes Region. Along with that responsibility, it proposed that I should also represent the African Union and the Great Lakes region as a facilitator and that I should be joined in these tasks by President Mkapa, a choice that the Secretary-General endorsed.

The Nairobi summit displayed a real sense of urgency. In the last two months of 2008, President Mkapa and I met with Presidents Kabila, Kagame, Dos Santos, Kibaki, Kikwete, Museveni and Sassou Nguesso. All called for a comprehensive solution to the crisis, based on dialogue. We have also met on four separate occasions with the leader of the Congrès national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP), Laurent Nkunda.

Following these meetings, a dialogue between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the CNDP opened on 8 December in Nairobi. That dialogue is ongoing. Much remains to be done, but as compared to where the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region found themselves on 7 November 2008, I am happy to report some progress.

First, in November, relations between Kinshasa and Kigali had sharply deteriorated. I am happy to tell the Council that Presidents Kabila and Kagame both now talk of considerable warming in the relationship and enhanced cooperation.

Secondly, in November, the Kinshasa Government was ill-disposed towards direct talks with the CNDP. Now, those talks are well under way.

Thirdly, in November, the CNDP threatened Goma. While Goma is still under pressure, particularly in terms of the dire humanitarian situation, the prospect of a military takeover of the town has considerably receded.

Concerning the dialogue, progress has remained slower than desirable. For the first month, it remained narrowly focused on procedural matters. Moreover, in the run-up to the end of the year, the CNDP was unwilling to sign a formal recommitment to its existing unilateral cessation of hostilities. It accused the Government of incursions into areas that it had called on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to occupy after it had vacated them.

During the holiday period, I remained in touch with Presidents Kagame and Kabila and with Laurent Nkunda. At first, Nkunda appeared reluctant for his delegation to return to Nairobi. Additionally, as the dialogue resumed on 6 January, the CNDP's military Chief of Staff, Bosco Ntaganda, announced his takeover of the movement. As of the present moment, the internal dynamics within the CNDP remain unclear.

On 8 January, I travelled to Kinshasa, Kigali and Jumbo, North Kivu Province, to consult with Presidents Kabala and Kalama and to meet with Nunda. All of these parties strongly reaffirmed their

commitment to the Nairobi dialogue. I was heartened to hear from Presidents Kabala and Kalama that their interaction and the relationship between their two countries had significantly improved as a result of frequent direct contact and ministerial-level meetings. Both presidents expressed satisfaction with the progress made in finding common ground to deal with issues of joint concern, in particular the issue of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR). In line with the Nairobi communiqué of 2007, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda have agreed on a military plan to put pressure on the FDLR. Both countries seem encouraged by the political message their enhanced cooperation is sending.

In Jomba, I met with CNDP leader Laurent Nkunda and a group of his political cadres. Again, he insisted that Government troops should withdraw from Kibati, near Goma, as a precondition for signing a joint cessation of hostilities declaration. But he showed flexibility concerning the CNDP's previous demand that the Presidents of the National Assembly and the Senate participate in the Nairobi dialogue as facilitators. Both of those figures have given both President Kabila and me their assurances that any outcomes of the dialogue which might demand action by the Congolese legislature would be examined sympathetically. Accordingly, I was able to reassure Nkunda.

Following these discussions, and with President Mkapa's able work with the parties in Nairobi, the dialogue, which resumed in Nairobi on 6 January, has begun to move a little more positively. In particular, the atmosphere between the two delegations has eased, with confidence beginning to be built and the parties increasingly working directly together.

On 12 January, the parties agreed the last of three documents that together lay the ground rules for the substantive discussions to follow. This last document, the terms of reference, is important also because it reflects a common understanding on the desired outcome of the Nairobi dialogue

> "to conclude a comprehensive agreement incorporating the *Actes d'engagement* signed in Goma and their modalities of implementation through a framework to be agreed by the parties".

This is critical, as it reaffirms the parties' commitment to the principles of the Goma process but calls for new implementation mechanisms, as well as for a comprehensive agreement on addressing the root causes of the conflict.

Just as important, the parties have now re-engaged in discussions towards a joint cessation of hostilities declaration. I must let the Council know, however, that in the past 48 hours, there have been reports and rumours in the subregion of a web of plans and counter-plans and of deals within deals. This has once more slowed down the momentum of the dialogue. Both sides have once again become intransigent, the Government side in particular. As we have done in the past when we observed such intransigency developing, we have today called for a brief recess in the dialogue. We will resume towards the end of next week.

If, on resuming, the parties can arrive at a joint cessation of hostilities declaration, this would be an important step forward. It would need to be undergirded by an effective and trusted independent monitoring mechanism. I trust that, when the time comes, I can count on the support of Council members to help establish, as soon as possible, such a mechanism, which would report directly to the mediation. Special Representative of the Secretary-General Doss and MONUC Force Commander Gaye, with whom I have been maintaining close and concerted contact since the beginning of this initiative, have indicated their willingness in principle for MONUC to lend its logistical support to such a mechanism.

Until such a time as agreement can be reached and an independent mechanism established, I have pleaded with both parties — and in particular the CNDP, which remains suspicious of MONUC — that they accept that MONUC monitor and verify the effective cessation of hostilities declarations currently in place. Looking ahead, dialogue must then proceed with critical discussions on humanitarian and security issues, to be followed by negotiations on political and economic matters. In my view, it is critical that we start with the humanitarian and security issues in order to allow for the safe and secure return of internally displaced persons to their homes and the establishment of security corridors and/or buffer zones, as well for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and modalities for the integration of former combatants into the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The long-suffering populations of the Kivus

must be able to return safely to their homes before the planting season in September.

We are still at a very early stage in the process. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, the region, President Mkapa and I will need the Council's continued political and material support, as well as that of its Governments, in bringing about durable peace.

Significant challenges remain. The first, as I have said, is that, while it is slowly picking up, the pace of the dialogue remains slow. I would appeal to the Council to use whatever leverage it may have on the parties to improve matters. If there continues to be obstruction, the Secretary-General may call upon the Security Council to consider what other measures may help encourage progress.

The second is that, at the CNDP's insistence, the dialogue remains a bilateral one, exclusively between it and the Government. But more than 20 armed groups signed the Goma Acts of Engagement in January 2008, along with many representatives of the different communities of North and South Kivu. Their interests must not and will not be left out of any comprehensive solution. We must together find the most effective way to link their interests and their commitments made under the Goma Agreement to the final outcome of the present dialogue.

Thirdly, the long-term presence on Congolese soil of foreign armed groups — the FDLR, the Lord's Resistance Army and others — remains a major factor. We will seek the right combination of measures to resolve that issue but, again, we will need the Council's help in finding it and in making it stick.

Finally, too often previous agreements have faltered because of the lack of political will, and because implementation and follow-through were neglected. I can assure the Council that I will leave no stone unturned to help the concerned parties arrive at a comprehensive, realistic and implementable agreement. All the agreements and accords in the world will help the people of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo not one bit if they are not faithfully implemented. The engagement of the region and of the continent as a whole will be crucial.

Much has been accomplished, but much more remains to be done. The momentum for peace generated so far cannot, must not and will not be allowed to die. The people of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, who have suffered so much and for so long, warrant better than that. They deserve, and indeed demand, full and lasting peace. Africa and the world must help make that peace a reality in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the whole of the Great Lakes region.

I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the opportunity to report to the Council.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank President Obasanjo for his briefing.

As agreed in the course of the Council's prior consultations, I now invite the members of the Council to continue their consideration of this issue in informal consultations.

*The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.*